

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE
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INFO AMEMBASSY BONN
AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L THE HAGUE 4708

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: NL, PINS, IR
SUBJECT: STUDENT OCCUPATION OF IRANIAN EMBASSY

REF: A) THE HAGUE 4680; B) THE HAGUE 4686

1. BASED ON DISCUSSIONS BETWEEN EMBASSY OFFICERS AND LOCAL POLICE OFFICIALS AND BETWEEN THE AMBASSADOR AND THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL (WHO WAS THE MFA NEGOTIATOR WITH THE STUDENTS), THE FOLLOWING IS A CHRONOLOGY OF EVENTS SURROUNDING THE BRIEF OCCUPATION BY IRANIAN STUDENTS OF THE EMBASSY ON AUGUST 23:

2. ACCESS. THE EMBASSY WAS OCCUPIED BY NINE IRANIAN STUDENTS, BELIEVED TO BE FROM GERMAN UNIVERSITIES, BUT NOT YET FIRMLY IDENTIFIED. THEY ENTERED THE EMBASSY SEQUENTIALLY AND WALKED PAST THE SINGLE GUARD ONE BY ONE OVER AN EXTENDED PERIOD OF TIME. ONCE INSIDE THE BUILDING THEY JOINED TOGETHER AND FOUND NO OBSTACLE IMPEDING ACCESS TO ANY PART OF THE BUILDING. THERE WERE NO INTERNAL BARRIERS OR RESTRICTIONS AND THE STUDENTS WERE ABLE TO OCCUPY TWO SEPARATE BUILDINGS, THE CHANCERY
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ITSELF AND AN ADJOINING CONSULAR OFFICE. OTHER EMPLOYEES WERE RELEASED OR ESCAPED AND THE CHARGE AND TWO CONSULAR EMPLOYEES WERE DETAINED AS HOSTAGES.

3. DEMANDS. ONCE INSIDE THE BUILDING, THE STUDENTS SMASHED FURNITURE, SPRAYED PAINT AND EMPTIED FILES. THEY WERE PARTICULARLY DESTRUCTIVE IN THE AMBASSADOR'S OFFICE, WHICH WAS

DESCRIBED BY THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL AS TOTALLY WRECKED. ALTHOUGH THEY HAD APPARENTLY INTENDED SEIZING THE EMBASSY AS A PROTEST AGAINST THE SHAH'S REGIME AND WHAT THEY CLAIMED WERE NEW OUTRAGES BY HIS GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING DELIBERATELY SETTING THE ABADAN THEATER FIRE, THE STUDENTS THEN ALTERED THEIR DEMANDS. THEY CLAIMED THAT DOCUMENTS WHICH THEY HAD FOUND GAVE EVIDENCE OF THE ACTIVITY IN THE NETHERLANDS OF SAVAK AND SAID THEY WOULD FREE THEIR HOSTATES IF DUTCH JOURNALISTS WERE ADMITTED INTO THE CHANCERY TO SEE THE ALLEGED PROOF.

4. NEGOTIATIONS. THE POLICE MOVED QUICKLY TO SURROUND THE BUILDINGS AND WERE REINFORCED BY A SPECIAL MOBILE UNIT OF 40 OFFICERS FROM THE HAGUE (THE CHANCERY IS LOCATED IN THE SUBURB OF WASSENAAR WHICH HAS IT'S OWN POLICE FORCE). THE CHIEF OF PROTOCOL HAD A SHARP EXCHANGE WITH THE CHARGE WHO CLAIMED THE DUTCH HAD NOT BEEN CONSCIENTIOUS ABOUT PROVIDING ADEQUATE SECURITY. (IRANIAN STUDENTS HAD OCCUPIED THE EMBASSY IN 1974. POLICE GUARDS WERE POSTED OUTSIDE THE EMBASSY AFTER THAT EVENT AND WERE MAINTAINED UNTIL 1977 WHEN THEY WERE REMOVED AT THE REQUEST OF THE IRANIANS.) AT SOME POINT IN THE NEGOTIATIONS, THE LOCAL POLICE HAD GIVEN THE STUDENTS PERMISSION TO REMOVE DOCUMENTS WHICH THEY WANTED FROM THE EMBASSY FILES; THIS LED TO ANOTHER VERBAL CLASH BETWEEN THE CHARGE AND THE POLICE.

5. OUTCOME. AT THE END OF THE AFTERNOON THE REINFORCED POLICE GAVE THE STUDENTS AN ULTIMATUM TO COME OUT AND LEAVE THEIR CONFIDENTIAL

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HOSTAGES UNHARMED OR THE POLICE WOULD ENTER AND TAKE THEM BY FORCE. AFTER A SHORT CONSULTATION, THE STUDENTS CAME OUT AND WERE ARRESTED. AFTER THEIR ARREST, THE POLICE STRIPPED THE STUDENTS AND REGAINED POSSESSION OF ALL THE DOCUMENTS WHICH THEY HAD TAKEN AND RETURNED THEM TO THE EMBASSY. THE POLICE HAVE TOLD US THAT THE STUDENTS WILL BE CHARGED WITH TRESPASSING, PROPERTY DESTRUCTION, AND THE UNLAWFUL DETENTION OF PERSONS.

JOSEPH

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